ST. PAUL
AND HIS CONVERTS
STUDIES IN
TYPICAL NEW TESTAMENT MISSIONS.

HARRINGTON C. LEES, M.A.

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A SERIES OF STUDIES IN TYPICAL NEW TESTAMENT MISSIONS

BY THE REV.

HARRINGTON C. LEES, M.A.

AUTHOR OF "THE SUNSHINE OF THE GOOD NEWS"
"THE PRACTICE OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST," ETC.

"*The care of all the churches*"
2 COR. xi. 28

D. Edmond Hiebert
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TO

MY WIFE

WHOSE MISSIONARY HEART HAS EVER
KINDLED MINE

"Then might we live together as one life,
And, reigning with one will in everything,
Have power on this dark land to lighten it,
And power on this dead world to make it live."

TENNYSON ("The Coming of Arthur").

PREFACE

THE limitation of space forbids a long introduction to the following studies. In any case, there is so large a field of literature on the subject of St. Paul's travels that a description of them even in outline is probably needless. I make no apology for the frequent references to Sir W. M. Ramsay's works in these pages. It is impossible in the compass of the book to discuss many of the debatable points, and I have thought it wise to refer to one whose verdict, if not final, may yet be authoritative.

On the missionary history in the Acts, the frame into which these sketches fit, a new and helpful book is *Turning-Points in the History of the Primitive Church*, by Rev. W. S. Hooton, a former C.M.S. missionary.

PREFACE

That God may bless these chapters to bring into some minds and hearts a more fruitful knowledge of two fields,—the World and the Word,—is my earnest prayer.

HARRINGTON C. LEES.

BECKENHAM, *July* 1910.

INTRODUCTION

THIS book is intended for general use as a series of Bible Studies which may help to the understanding of the principles upon which fruitful Missionary work may be conducted at the present day. Each Epistle, therefore, has been studied in a particular light, and the treatment is not intended to be more than suggestive. The special groups of readers who have been borne in mind are Missionary Study Bands and Bible Classes, but there is much which the individual reader may also ponder, and, it is hoped, find useful. The meetings of students will in many cases be held weekly, sometimes monthly. In the former case, there will naturally be less time for close study, and it might be found helpful if the leader of the band divided the work into sections. But, if possible, each member should attempt to cover the ground of the whole chapter thoughtfully and prayerfully, Bible in hand; for the chapters are not intended to supersede study of the Bible, but to indicate a train of thought in reading each Epistle. The leader should copy out the questions on slips of paper, and distribute them to individual members the week or month before they are required. The Questions for Discussion will probably be too numerous for a single meeting, but selection may be made according to the needs of the class or circle. The Programme is therefore only suggestive, and may be varied at the discretion of the leader. Indeed, I have found it helpful to set questions occasionally upon the subject-matter of the chapters themselves. The subjects may be illustrated from the current Church Missionary Society magazines. Discussions should be free, but the Bible must be assumed as the final authority. Prayer should never be omitted amid the interests of debate. The whole atmosphere of the circle should be devotional. Difficult questions are marked with an asterisk. If any further guidance be needed, the leader of the circle will find a very complete series of suggestions in the introduction to Mr. Manley's *Gospel in the Psalms.*

TABLE OF PAULINE DATES

(Extract from SIR W. M. RAMSAY'S *Pauline Studies*)

Birth of St. Paul	after Passover,	B.C. 1
Entrance on public life in his thirtieth year	after Passover,	A.D. 29
Conversion	January 25,	32
First visit to Jerusalem	(in the third year, Gal. i. 18)	34
Second visit to Jerusalem	(in the fourteenth year, Gal. ii. 1)	45
First missionary journey	(perhaps March 47) probably March	46
Return to Antioch	(perhaps August 49) probably about August	48
Third visit to Jerusalem; the Apostolic Council	early	50
Second missionary journey	begins after Passover	50
In Corinth (Epistles to Thessalonians)	September 51, to February	53
Fourth visit to Jerusalem at the Passover	March 22 to 29,	53
Return to Antioch (Epistle to Galatians)	April	53
Third missionary journey	begins early summer	53
In Ephesus (First Epistle to Corinthians)	December 53 to March	56
In Macedonia (Second Epistle to Corinthians)	Summer and Autumn	56
In Corinth (Epistle to Romans)	Winter 56 to	57
At Jerusalem at Pentecost		57
Imprisonment in Cæsarea	June 57 to June	59
Voyage to Rome	February 60 to (at latest) February	62
Later journeys	62 to	66
Taken prisoner at Nicopolis	Winter of 66 to	67
Execution at Rome		67

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ST. PAUL AND THE ROMANS

THE CHURCH AND THE NATIONS

"Is this the time, O Church of Christ, to sound
Retreat? To arm, with weapons cheap and blunt,
The men and women who have borne the brunt
Of truth's fierce strife, and nobly held their ground?
Is this the time to halt, when all around
Horizons lift, new destinies confront,
Stern duties wait our nation, never wont
To play the laggard, when God's will was found?
No! rather strengthen stakes and lengthen cords.
Enlarge thy plans and gifts, O thou elect,
And to thy kingdom come for such a time!
The earth with all its fulness is the Lord's.
Great things attempt for Him, great things expect,
Whose love imperial is, whose power sublime."

CHAPTER I

ST. PAUL AND THE ROMANS

A MESSAGE FOR THE HEART OF THE EMPIRE

"We have received apostleship for *obedience to the faith among all nations.*"—ROM. i. 5.

"According to the commandment of the everlasting God made known *to all nations for the obedience of faith.*"—ROM. xvi. 26.

THE city of Rome formed the heart of the Empire, and was therefore the hub of the whole world. The area ruled was very large. We may well begin our study by recalling the size of this great dominion. It included Italy, Switzerland, France, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Holland (part), England and Wales, Austria (part), Greece, Servia, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Turkey in Europe, the Crimea, Turkey in Asia, including Armenia, Asia Minor, Palestine, and Arabia (as far as the Persian border), Egypt, Barca, Tripoli,

Algeria, Morocco, and the islands of the Mediterranean. Rome's rule was also a well-informed system. At the centre of this great web was the city, with a remarkable and sensitive touch on all movements of activity and thought within the Empire. "All roads lead to Rome," says the old proverb, and this was largely true. It is astonishing how completely contact was maintained with the most distant parts; and the rapidity with which information travelled was remarkable.

The Empire had developed from very small beginnings. Like ourselves, the Romans had passed through three stages of national life: first, pastoral and agricultural prosperity, then commercial development, and then imperial expansion. Like the English, too, they were a very mixed race, the original stock having been replenished by the inflow of immigrant blood, Sabine, Etruscan, and Lydian, just as the British stock was reinforced by Norman, Saxon, Dane, and (in some measure) Roman.

The Empire was militant, but generally speaking not pugnacious. Rome was the great ruler of the world, but she was also the great peacemaker. The strength of her hand

was usually the measure of the tranquillity of those whom she grasped. On the whole it was a just hand, and received a willing submission. "She could leave," says Professor Gwatkin, "a score of lictors (police) to keep the peace of Asia (the province); a garrison of twelve hundred men to answer for the threescore states of Gaul (France). She no more ruled the world than we rule India by the naked sword." Her Empire then was one based upon national influence and a genius for administration.

What Rome lacked was a religious link. Outward prosperity alone never satisfies the inmost and best part of man, and just before Christ came, the thirst of the nations had become unendurable. The Roman world needed a Saviour. And there is no bond which makes for imperial union like the tie of a common faith. The Empire was conscious of its need; it was convinced that only Divine intervention could furnish a Saviour for it. Now this tendency and longing were perceived at Rome, and the ingenuity of the rulers devised a method for satisfying the instinct, and at the same time strengthening the unity of the Empire. The plan was to establish the universal worship of the Emperor as a god,

and partly to supersede national worships by a universal religion, while of course allowing the local systems to continue in addition. This was only partly successful, but it became a great force.

The rule of Rome also tended to become more unselfish. Under Republican influences her aim had been selfish—to dominate other nations, and get all she could out of them. The individual place-hunters filled their own pockets in the name of the State. We need not judge Rome too hardly. There are similar blots upon some of our own earlier pages, when great territories were governed under old commercial companies (in spite of the distinguished and largely honourable record of the latter). Then, however, the Republic became an Empire. With higher aims from the very first, and a sense of duty to the conquered world, increasing upon it as the time went on, the rule became more imperial, and less imperious. This also we have seen in the story of our own Empire. Rome's desire was to make a solid unity which would combine the sum of earthly forces with the stimulus of religious motives.

In view, then, of such conditions, St. Paul writes this Epistle to those who live at the

heart of the Empire. The idea of a religious link to foster imperial unity was a good one, and he aims at seizing it for Christ. An Imperial Government may be a great hindrance to the Gospel, but on the other hand it may be the greatest help. St. Paul had to tell of a religion which could bind all nations together in worship, but it was not the worship of the Emperor: it was the Gospel of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ; and the single fact that the Empire was universal (as far as the knowledge of that day went) went far to complete the fulness of time for Christ's coming. This surely is the suggestive thought which underlies St. Luke ii. 1. When one man issues orders to the world, the MAN Christ Jesus is He who should issue them.

The difficulty which St. Paul had to face was that of grafting the wild shoot of Roman religious notions on to the true stock of the Faith which had been revealed to the Jews, and had been made especially plain to this "Hebrew of the Hebrews," in order that the nations might be brought into "obedience to the Faith." This phrase, twice repeated, is the polar axis on which the Epistle revolves. It forms the top and bottom of this missionary structure. The Epistle opens and closes with

it. It is interesting, therefore, to remember that in this imperial letter he uses the great illustration of the grafting practice which is still in use in Palestine to-day. "The process, when successful, shows," says Professor Ramsay, "that although the old stock has lost vigour and ceased to produce fruit, it may recover strength and productive power from the influence of the vigorous wild shoot which is grafted upon it, while the fruit that is grown on the new shoot will be more fleshy and richer in oil than the natural fruit of the wild olive." Let us say in passing that the principle is worth bearing in mind as a Divine and effective remedy for Churches and parishes where spiritual life is at a low ebb. The introduction of the foreign shoot blesses as much as it is blessed.

But it is also a magnificent principle for those at the heart of an Empire to practise. When old customs lose force by repetition, when men are tempted to be blasé or pessimistic, when selfishness threatens to swamp a nation through insularity and narrowness, the salvation of a people is devotion to a noble campaign of imperial blessing. The grafts will bless the old stock.

St. Paul saw that if Rome would hear the

call of God, St. John's vision might yet be realised—"The Kingdoms of this world are become the Kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ" (Rev. xi. 15).

The date of this letter is about 57 A.D. It was written from Corinth, and its place in the chronology of the Acts is at ch. xx. 2, 3. There were evidently many Christians in Rome before St. Paul arrived, but we are probably right in judging by the salutations of Rom. xvi., that a very large number of them were Christian Jewish and Greek slaves who had been transferred to the Emperor from the royal household of Aristobulus, one of the Herods in Judæa. At any rate, we shall not be far wrong if we say that it was St. Paul's message and work and residence which made the Christian Church, in this difficult centre, so strong in character and permanent in influence. It must never be forgotten that the corrupt doctrine and misused power which characterised mediæval Rome were based upon original purity and holiness which made the church of the metropolis a worthy child of the apostle.

In view of all that we have already seen, we shall not be astonished to find, in turning to study the letter itself, that besides a wealth

of deep teaching, it contains twelve of the simplest and the most comprehensive statements of general missionary principles in the New Testament, which we at the centre of a great Empire shall do well to lay to heart.

They are as follows :—

1. *We have a very definite confession of personal faith and individual responsibility* (i. 1–5, 14–17).—Note the phrases which involve belief in the Bible as the rule of faith (ver. 2), the Incarnation (ver. 3), and Divinity (ver. 4), the death and resurrection of Christ (ver. 4), the gift of grace (ver. 5), the trust of service (ver. 5), and personal appropriation of responsibility (vers. 14–16).

2. *We have a full statement of the nature and origin of idolatry* (i. 18 ff.), *which "holds down"* (R.V.) *the truth.*—Note what is said as to the possibility and limits of a purely natural religion (vers. 19, 20), as to the first cause of early decay (vers. 21, 23), as to the mental and spiritual loss within (vers. 21), as to the visible results without (vers. 23, 25).

3. *We have a lurid description of the foulness of idolatrous religions* (i. 24–32).—We need not elaborate a nauseous subject. The perpetual truth of the portrait is acknowledged by the heathen to-day, as well as by our missionaries.

Ponder the connection between corrupt ideals and corrupt practices. Note the development from indulgence in sin to delight in it, and the corresponding loosening of the tie between God and man ("God gave them up," i. 24, 26, 28).

4. *We have a clear statement of the principles on which God judges unevangelised heathen* (i. and ii.).—The Romans were particularly strong upon points of law and justice. It is interesting, therefore, to see how much of the letter deals with God's law and justice, and man's position as a just or justified being. Note the reason why a heathen will be without excuse in the day of God, (*a*) because of what he might have seen; (*b*) because of what he might have done (i. 21, 25). What law is in force in a heathen community before the light of revelation comes to them (ii. 14, 15)? What has St. Paul to say as to the hindrance caused by the inconsistencies of religious people (ii. 17)? What is the threefold result if a heathen does live up to his light (ii. 10)?

5. *We have a cogent argument for the necessity of a universal Redeemer* (iii., iv., v.).—What is the standing of every Jew or heathen in the light of God's revealed law (iii. 23)? For whom, then, is God's righteousness available

(iii. 22)? What is Abraham's relation to the nations (iv. 13–17)? What argument is drawn from the law of heredity (v. 17–19)?

6. *We have a careful analysis of a convert's experiences* (vi., vii.).—What force does a new convert find at work in his heart after he has come to Christ (vii. 21)? Is it inevitable and irremediable?

7. *We have a comprehensive sketch of the results of full redemption* (viii.).—What remedy does St. Paul prescribe for the defeated Christian convert (viii. 9, 14)? How does this spiritual emancipation affect the question of persecution (viii. 31)?

8. *We have a pointed argument for Jewish missions* (ix.–x. 4).—He gives us a reminder of how much the world owes to them as a nation (ix. 4, 5). It is an act of ingratitude for a man to kick down the ladder by which he has climbed. There is a lesson of self-sacrifice in St. Paul's anxiety for their souls (ix. 3), and a good illustration of the emptiness of merely negative attitudes towards Christ in his prayer for them (x. 1). What is his explanation of the reason why they have missed their way (x. 2–4)?

9. *We have a detailed reasoning on the need of foreign missions* (x. 5–21).—Note how many

Christ is willing to save (x. 13). What is the reason why many are not being saved (x. 14)?

10. *We have a deep philosophic statement of the plan of History* (ix.).—What place is the Jew to have in the conversion of the world, if we are occupied with its evangelisation (xi. 12–16)?

11. *We have a fine catalogue of personal and social Christian consistencies* (xii., xiii.).—Note the relation of converts to one another (xii. 4–21), to the State (xiii. 7), to the world outside (xiii. 8–14), their attitude on doubtful things (xiv.).

12. *We have a detailed series of quotations of the principles on which Scripture commands the propagation of the Gospel* (xv.).—From what four O.T. sources does St. Paul justify foreign missions (Ps. xviii., Deut. xxxii., Ps. cxvii., Isa. xi.)? What is St. Paul's principle in choosing a place of service (xv. 20)? Upon what Scripture does he base it (Isa. lii. 15)?

These twelve lines of principle are wound up by a detailed list of Church members, with many personal items. These might well be analysed and studied, as showing what a holy family a missionary congregation may be, and what their respective contributions to the whole work.

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Collection

Questions suitable for Discussion

1. "The primitive savage who develops naturally out of the stage of 'totemism' into the wisdom of Socrates, or he who transforms his fetish in the course of many generations into the Jehovah of the Hebrews is unknown to me." Is this view St. Paul's as well as Professor Ramsay's? Does the first chapter lead us to believe that heathenism, left to itself, ever raises itself?

2. Does St. Paul think the heathen live up to their light?

3. Contrast the results of Nature-worship on Religion, and spiritual worship on Nature (i. and viii.).

4. A missionary to Moslems has said: "The time has not yet come because we have forgotten to wind the clock; the doors are shut because we keep the keys in our pockets; the Mohammedans are not converted because we ourselves have not yet been sufficiently converted." How does this bear out the argument of Rom. x.?

5. Dr. Weymouth renders the first few words of Rom. xv. 23: "*But now as there is no more unoccupied ground in this part of the world.*" What qualified approval is implied in these words for such a motto as "The British Empire for Christ."

*6. Inquirers in the Central Provinces of India have asked: "How can the death of one man take away the sins of the world?" "If the Lamb of God has taken away the sins of the world, how is it that so much sin remains?" "How was it possible for a Deity to die a malefactor's death?" "If Christ was man, how could a man's death effect an atonement?" What are the mistakes implied in these questions? Could you answer any of these difficulties from this Epistle in your own words?

*7. Compare or contrast the Roman and British Empires in regard to the way in which territories have been acquired, the manner in which they are ruled, the motive which may underlie our dominating force. How does a just rule prepare for the Gospel? Or an atmosphere of liberty prepare for the imparting of light? What effect may we expect the Gospel to have in maintaining loyalty or allaying sedition?

Work to be Done

If the Circle meets monthly, there will be time to cover probably the whole of the suggested ground. If weekly, the most important part to concentrate upon is the working up of the twelve missionary principles with their references.

Suggested Programme

Aim: To see what lesson the Epistle to the Romans brings to the British Empire to-day.

1. Hymn 48 (Church Missionary Hymnal).
2. Prayer by leader, including Good Friday Collect (adapted, substituting "Jews, Mohammedans, heathen, and unbelievers" for the four more ancient terms).
3. Let several previously selected members give the replies under the different lines of missionary principle which demand an answer. These should be written, to avoid diffuseness.
4. A discussion (which may, but *need not*, be based upon a short paper not exceeding three hundred words) upon any of the topics suggested as suitable, according to the discretion of the leader.
5. Prayer by several members.
6. Hymn 30, and benediction.

(Those who wish to study further the lines developed in this chapter may find much help and profit in Professor Gwatkin's article, "Roman Empire," in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*; and Professor Sir W. M. Ramsay's *Paul the Traveller*; *Pauline Studies*, chs. iii., vi., vii., ix., x.; *Cities of St. Paul*, ch. i.)

ST. PAUL AND CORINTH

MISSIONARY GIVING

THE MOHAMMEDAN BEGGAR'S CRY

"In shadow of a crumbling mosque he stands,
An aged mendicant with want outworn,
Eyes from their shrunken sockets ruthless torn
For crimes in lawless youth,—for so demands
The cruel Moslem code. With trembling hands
Outheld for aid, he only lives to mourn,
Till kindly Death beyond the earthly bourne
Shall carry him at last, and loose his bands.

To motley crowds that careless come and go
He murmurs, '*Give me what belongs to God*' :
That cry proclaims the debt that Christians owe
His country where Mohammed's legions trod,
And with the sword their creed unholy spread,
Robbing her children of the Living Bread."

S. S. M'CURRY (*In Keswick Vale*).

THE RESPONSE

"By earth's highway the nations pleading stand
In all their blindness, hungry for Heaven's bread :
The loaf in reach of all within our land
Shall we withhold who to our full have fed ?
Nay, give ye them to eat, the Master cries,
Who 'mid the hungry hordes Himself hath trod.
We deem not ours the means His love supplies,
But gladly render 'what belongs to God.'"

H. C. L.

CHAPTER II

ST. PAUL AND CORINTH

THE GOSPEL IN A HEATHEN PORT

"Grant us, Saviour, while we live
Wholly, only, Thine to be;
Teach us, Master, how to give
All we have and are to Thee."

THESE couplets of Frances Havergal's may be said, generally speaking, to cover the ground of St. Paul's two letters to Corinth: the first is occupied with Christian living; the second, to some extent, with Christian giving. Imports and exports are the chief matters of concern in marine commerce, and similarly, in the Christian life, the habits we acquire and the gifts we impart are questions of the deepest interest. We usually speak of them under the more conventional terms, Consecration and Service. The temple of holiness, the lamp of witness,

and the harvest-field of fruit are the chief figures of the two Epistles.

All great ports are places of special temptation, and in a heathen port the perils are unusually insidious. To use the rueful broken English of a convert in a Japanese seaside town,[1] "The circular atmosphere is *not* Christianious"!

There are perhaps five main lines along which the difficulties in a town of this kind attack the spiritual life of the Church.

1. The constant influx of travellers produces a blacker and more variegated type of wickedness than in other places. Bombay, Singapore, Hong-Kong, Port Said, have an unsavoury reputation in the sphere of morals.

2. The general spirit of worldliness, mingled with things which are more than doubtful, makes it difficult for converts to take that part in public functions, which in a Christian land is harmless and even desirable.

3. Questions of financial motives and speculations are frequent, and luxury of life often results in poorness of giving.

4. The competitive spirit which commerce is apt to foster does not always aid the brotherly love of the Churches.

[1] *Church Missionary Report*, 1909, p. 224.

5. The quickening of the intellect, which is induced by the general keenness of living, works in two directions, producing on the one hand a spirit of mental arrogance which looks down on a childlike faith, and on the other a liability to be carried away by religious novelties, and to welcome extravagances in spiritual matters.

Now I think it is clear that these general features of the life of a large commercial port were specially present at Corinth. Corinth was always thronged with travellers, and the viciousness of its life was proverbial. It had the undesirable repute we now assign to Paris or Cairo among the degenerate youth of the Roman world. As a result, its public festivities were no place for Christians. Its temple of uncleanness was a public municipal banqueting-hall.

"It was one of the greatest centres of influence in the Roman world, the leading commercial city of Greece, and the richest," says Professor Ramsay. Built on a narrow neck of land, it was in the unusual position of having both an eastern harbour (Cenchrea, Rom. xvi. 1) and a western.

The competitive spirit is evidenced, among other things, by the fact that Corinth was one

of the great athletic and racing resorts, while the religious quacks and impostors, professing a new philosophy, or teaching a new creed, were notorious frequenters of the city.

It must be remembered, however, that difficulties mean opportunities. Victories can only be produced by fights. The harder the problem, the greater the scope for the Gospel. St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans, was dealing largely with general principles. In these two letters he applies those principles to problems which menaced the permanent life of the Church. And, as one of our missionaries in China writes: "There is all the difference between a *mission*, which is a matter of temporary interest, and the Church, which will remain till our Lord comes."

It is the practical way in which St. Paul goes to work here which makes these Epistles an especially valuable guide, for example, to a native Church Council.

To the partisans, he speaks of the common headship of Christ (1 Cor. i.); to those who swarmed the temple of lust, he gives the finest description of pure love in all literature (1 Cor. xiii.), and tells of the temple within which the Spirit of holiness dwells (1 Cor. vi.). To those who knew the commonplaces of

travel, he sketches the hardships of missionary adventure (2 Cor. vi., xi.); to those who idolised physical strength and mental agility, he speaks of a grace and power which make weakness efficient, and bring spiritual fruits from a simple message (1 Cor. ii., 2 Cor. xii.).

The First Epistle was probably written about the autumn of 55 A.D. from Ephesus (its place in Acts is xix. 10), in reply to questions on various difficulties. The word "concerning" will give us the clue to these (1 Cor. vii. 1, 25, viii. 1, R.V., xii. 1, xvi. 1).

The Second was written partly in anxiety as to the reception of a severe letter St. Paul had written (we are not sure whether it was 1 Corinthians or not), partly in joyful relief at the knowledge that it had been successful. Its date is about the autumn of A.D. 56, and its place in Acts probably xx. 1 (Macedonia).

Let us look, then, at the five great problems, and St. Paul's handling of them.

1. The wickedness of the city made the life of the converts particularly liable to degeneration (see especially 1 Cor. ch. v., vi. 9–20, vii.[1], x. 1–14; 2 Cor. vii.) The one gross case quoted is only an illustration of what others were meeting in the way of temptation. It is pathetic that

[1] By implication.

even St. Paul admits that if they were never to have anything to do with openly evil livers "that would mean that you would be compelled to go out of the world altogether" (1, v. 10, Weymouth). Note his illustration on the infection of sin (1, v. 6), and his strict orders as to isolation for the sake of the others (1, v. 11), the penalty of persisting in the evil course (1, vi. 10). How does he apply Christ's death as a motive for purity (1, vi. 11, 20)? How does the Resurrection give an illustration of deliverance (1, vi. 14)? What has the Holy Spirit to do with victory over sin (1, vi. 19)? In the Second Epistle what is said of the victory in the Church over this sin (2, vii. 11, 12)? The evil atmosphere of town inns made it necessary to entertain Christian travellers in Christian homes. What allusion is made to a Corinthian who offered large hospitality in Rom. xvi.? Another question, which arose partly out of the sin of the city, was the marriage of converts. What is St. Paul's rule as to a heathen wife married to a Christian husband (1, vii. 12)? as to a Christian wife married to a heathen husband (1, vii. 13)? What phrase does St. Paul use in discussing the remarriage of a widow which implies that mixed marriages with heathen are forbidden (1, vii. 39)?

2. St. Paul also discusses the question of public municipal functions held in heathen temples. "In idolatrous worship," says Professor Ramsay, "a necessary and invariable accompaniment was immorality." Mention St. Paul's view as to the peril of Christians who go there (1, x. 14, 19, 20), and as to the effect on others who see them there (1, viii. 10).

3. In regard to questions of finance, systems of teaching were as much a matter of commerce to the Corinthians as material things. They were accustomed to see a new teacher of philosophy charging high fees, and in modern phrase, "making a good thing out of it." They even despised St. Paul as rather second-rate, because he preached for nothing, doubtless, as they thought, with the idea of making a high charge when his reputation grew. Show St. Paul's middle line (1, ch. ix. R.V.) in vindicating the right of missionaries to be paid, and married; and, further, the right of the *heathen* as distinguished from the converts to have the Gospel preached without charge.

On the other side, St. Paul was training his converts to give, instead of spending money on themselves. His scheme of getting the four provinces of Achaia, Macedonia, Galatia, and Asia (*i.e.* the Churches of (*a*) Corinth;

(*b*) Thessalonica and Philippi; (*c*) Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch; and (*d*) Ephesus) to share in famine relief-funds for Jerusalem meant unification in motive, and self-denial in practice. From 1 Cor. xvi. and 2 Cor. viii., ix., show that Christian giving should be systematic (1, xvi. 1), superhuman (2, viii. 1), not curtailed even in hard times (2, viii. 2, 3), voluntary (2, viii. 12), proportional (1, xvi. 1, 2, viii. 12), unmurmuring (2, ix. 7), accompanied by a consecrated life (2, viii. 5); for a subscription is no substitute for service. Its administration must be business-like: What does St. Paul say about his finance committee (2, viii. 19–21)? What are the rewards of giving (2, ix. 6, 7, 8, 10)?

4. Competition is only healthy when carried on in the spirit of love. Show that St. Paul considers mere party spirit a proof of immaturity (1 Cor. iii. 1–3), mistaken estimate of self (1, iii. 7), blindness to the work of the Holy Ghost (1, xii. 4–13), blindness to our debt to others (1, xii. 15–20).

5. In the matter of intellectual pride (see 1, chs. i., ii., iii., viii.): What has St. Paul to say to the members who were noble and powerful and wise about their attitude to the humbler converts (1, i. 26–29; note, "not many" implies

"some")? They plumed themselves that they were more mature and up-to-date than their leaders. With what illustration does St. Paul correct this impression (1, iii. 1–3)? Does St. Paul approve of foolish preaching (1, i. 17–25)? What is the danger of knowledge, and the security of a spirit of love (1, viii. 1)?

The desire for novelties and extravagances in the mission field is very plainly dealt with (1, xii., xiii., xiv.). How does St. Paul show that we have no right to demand, for instance, the gift of healing or the speaking with tongues from converts as a proof of spiritual fulness (1, xii. 29, 30, 31)? He hints that the miraculous signs of his age were to pass away with it (1, xiii. 8). How does he emphasise the absolute impossibility of laying down any lines along which the Holy Spirit must work (1, xii. 11)?

Questions for Discussion

1. "Idol-worship is defended," writes a missionary, "on the ground that God pervades all things, or that the idol is not worshipped, but only the deity it represents; and the practice of Roman Catholics is often adduced in favour of their views." St. Paul uses the words "idol," "idolater," "idolatry," twenty-two times, of which seventeen are in these

Epistles. The other passages are Rom. ii. 22 ; Gal. v. 20 ; Eph. v. 5 ; Col. iii. 5 ; 1 Thess. i. 9. Write a short paper on the whole number, showing very briefly what St. Paul teaches as to (1) the nature of idolatry ; (2) the unseen forces behind it ; (3) the moral effect on the worshippers ; (4) the results of contact with it ; (5) God's will with regard to it.

*2. "The question of marriage so often arises in connection with baptism," writes Miss Tristram from Japan ; "it may be that the engagement is already made, or that the parents are determined it must be to a non-Christian, and then comes the question whether the girl is to be baptized, knowing that shortly she must be so married ; whether on that account she is to put off her baptism till after marriage, hoping she may be free for it then ; or whether she is to claim the right of refusing the man chosen for her, a right given by law but not by custom. Whatever the girls' thoughts on these points may be, we do not in any case allow them to be baptized without the parents' consent." How does 1 Cor. vii. bear upon this difficult problem ?

3. What light does St. Paul throw on 1 Cor. i., iii., xii. upon interdenominational difficulties ?

4. What passages in these Epistles are illustrated by the following facts in the modern mission field ?

(a) "*Formerly they were on the beg continually.*

Now no begging, but giving us freely what they had." Comment by Rev. C. E. Whittaker, on Eskimo at Kitigagzooit, Mackenzie River, 1909.

(b) "*One man had his hand plunged into boiling water; another was put into the village stocks; some were beaten; others had much trouble in connection with their lands; and a few were imprisoned on what appeared to be false charges*" (Telugu country).

(c) "*In China, in particular, political reasons often lead men and women to join the Church in the hope that its influence may be used in their behalf in lawsuits.*"

(d) "*In Mid-China there was grave reason to suspect that Christians, led astray in some cases by heathen wives, had recourse to mediums.*"

(e) "*We cannot fully realise all the difficulties which confront the converts. While many of us pray for the heathen, we forget the babes in Christ, and the sin in which they have been reared, in the midst of which, even after they become Christians, they are compelled to live*" (Miss Norton, Japan).

(f) "*A former member of the Allahabad Hostel tells how he had there learned to work disinterestedly without a selfish motive for anything, especially a public cause.*"

(g) "*In Tinnevelly the contributions of the Christians are nearly three times as much as are required to support their own clergy.*"

ST. PAUL AND HIS CONVERTS

Programme

(As the Epistles are long, the principal work should be focused on the programme, or possibly two evenings might be devoted to the work.)

Aim: To see how the Gospel works in the atmosphere of the worst heathen cities.

1. Silent prayer for blessing upon the study, followed by Collect for Third Sunday after Easter.
2. Hymn No. 1.
3. Reading of paper on idolatry (see No. 1, questions for discussion).
4. Prayer by one of the members.
5. Leader asks questions on the five great problems stated in the chapter, and the practical application made by St. Paul.
6. References given to parallel the seven illustrations from the mission field.
7. Brief discussion on "Missionary Giving" in the light of the Epistles.
8. Hymn 74.
9. Prayer and benediction.

(Further help may be obtained from Hastings' *Dict.*, art. "Corinthians," by Marcus Dods, and "Corinth," by Ramsay; see also Ramsay's *St. Paul the Traveller*, ch. xi.; *Cities of St. Paul*, ch. i.; *Pauline Studies*, ch. vi.)

ST. PAUL AND THE GALATIANS

THE GOSPEL AND THE MULTITUDES

"Then the Black-Robe chief, the prophet,
Told his message to the people,
Told the purport of his mission,
Told them of the Virgin Mary,
And her blessed Son, the Saviour:
How in distant lands and ages
He had lived on earth as we do;
How He fasted, prayed, and laboured;
How the Jews, the tribe accursed,
Mocked Him, scourged Him, crucified Him;
How He rose from where they laid Him,
Walked again with His disciples,
And ascended into heaven.

And the chiefs made answer, saying:
'We have listened to your message,
We have heard your words of wisdom,
We will think on what you tell us.
It is well for us, O brothers,
That you come so far to see us!'

Then they rose up and departed,
Each one homeward to his wigwam,
To the young men and the women,
Told the story of the strangers,
Whom the Master of Life had sent them
From the shining land of Wabun."

Longfellow, "Hiawatha's Departure."

CHAPTER III

ST. PAUL AND THE GALATIANS

THE GOSPEL IN THE COUNTRY DISTRICTS

THE letters of St. Paul to Corinth have dealt specially with the difficulties of city life. In the Epistle to the Galatians we have a message to the country; for the cities addressed were really country towns whose influence was spread over a large rustic area, and whose atmosphere was much influenced by the simplicity of their surroundings. It is interesting, therefore, to note that we have here a letter addressed to a group of churches rather than a single community. The letter is really a circular.

But it is well at the outset to remind ourselves who the Galatians were. We do not usually recognise that the word covers the dwellers in Pisidian Antioch, Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium. But when we do realise it,

the short chapters are flooded with a new light, and the Epistle finds a suitable setting.

Antioch (which must be distinguished from Antioch in Syria, a very important place) was of little or no consequence, apart from the fact that it had been chosen by the Romans as a governing centre of a wide region. Derbe was only a second-rate city; Lystra, a little hill-town whose sole claim to importance was that it was a military station in a barbarous district; while Iconium was a comparatively insignificant place, except for the fact of its being a Roman police-centre. In this letter, then, Paul addresses men widely differing in education, and even in language, but linked together by just one common bond, that they were members of the same province, or, as we might now say, of the same county. Indeed, the features which distinguished them are just those which we associate with a British area of the kind. The population of the country, for the most part, is a blend of rustics and those whom we call "county people." Cultured and ignorant are in much more striking contrast than in the cities. One of the most interesting of New Testament studies is the way in which St. Paul varies his methods to suit the need of his audience. And this

Epistle illustrates the missionary method of dealing with country towns and villages. This is of enormous importance, for we must not forget that though in England the proportion of inhabitants is probably 90 per cent. in towns and 10 per cent. in villages, in India and China 90 per cent. dwell in the villages and about 10 per cent. in towns.

The first feature which strikes us is the union of simplicity of language with depth of thought. "The Epistle," says Professor Ramsay, "moves amid the people, and the author has caught his terms, in many a case, from the mouth of the people." He uses homely illustrations which all can understand. The witch's spell (iii. 1), the deserting soldier (i. 6), the tutor-slave (iii. 24), the legal process of adoption (iv. 5), the leaven in the bread (v. 9), the foot-race (v. 7), were illustrations which every one of them grasped at once, as everyday matters in their life. In Galatia lay the typical slave-centre of the Roman world (Phrygia); St. Paul therefore talks largely of the blessings of the freedom which is spiritual (freedom, eleven times; bondage, twelve times mentioned). It was a common custom to brand the slaves; St. Paul speaks of himself as branded by Christ (vi. 17), alluding

probably to scars caused by the stoning at Lystra and the police-birch at both Lystra and Antioch.[1] Language of this kind was calculated to stimulate into interest a people who were just rising out of the torpor of Oriental peasant life. A simple audience, too, is always touched by personal testimony of spiritual experience; and nowhere does St. Paul more vividly describe the effects of his own conversion (i. 12–16, 23, 24). On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that the argument pre-supposes a certain amount of education; it is closely reasoned, and was worth pondering over by the better classes who would be found in the town-centres.

There is a certain freedom and lack of reserve in rustic ways of speech, and St. Paul speaks with the utmost directness of the sins which were the besetting ones of the region in Galatia. In the list of fifteen faults (v. 19–21, R.V.), there are three groups, corresponding to three different kinds of influence likely to affect recent converts. (1) Those fostered by pagan religions, the first five named. . . . (2) Faults connected with municipal politics,—the next eight. . . . Little towns are always jealous of one another, and the Galatians were

[1] *Paul the Traveller*, pp. 107, 304.

no exception. Village bickerings and gossip are poisonous, and hinder brotherly love in no common degree. (3) The faults of social life, drunkenness and revelling. These are not by any means confined to the country, but no one who has lived in a country town can forget their accentuation. The itinerant missionary will find an open door for the Gospel in proportion as the hearers are convicted of sin, especially in these three directions.

We notice also in this letter the unusual touch of authority. It stands almost alone in this attitude. Sir William Ramsay says that the best possible illustration of the tone of the whole Epistle is the experience of the traveller in the same district to-day; for the traveller who mixes with the people learns how necessary is the touch of authority mixed with frankness and courtesy. This is true in the country everywhere, and nowhere more so than in the East. The dweller in the cities is apt to resent anything which sounds like dictation. These country districts were more susceptible of influence by personality and strong speech. Firmness is not necessarily coldness, authority is not tyranny. The man who wishes to lead country-folk, must speak

like a leader. This has not always been understood by people at home, in criticising those who have to deal with simple native races in the way of administration, whether in the State or in the Church. Closely allied to this is the strong adherence to a person, a feeling on which St. Paul plays repeatedly here. Many forlorn hopes in the past have been recruited from the country districts, and St. Paul, animated by the hope that is not forlorn, appeals confidently to that old-time devotion which once would have given its very eyes if he might see more clearly (Gal. iv. 15). As with many other country-people, the personal devotion of the Galatians very often centred in their priests. Superstitious devotion to an artificial system of rules, and implicit obedience to the directions of the priests, were universal among the uneducated population. This thought and spirit have been seized upon and used with consummate skill in the opening chapters of the Epistle. St. Paul speaks most dogmatically as to the uniqueness and Divine authority of his message (Gal. i. 8–12), and follows it up by a most definite assertion as to his independence in regard to all other teachers.

There is a simplicity of faith in country-folk

which is refreshing and rare in the towns. Their gods are very real to them. In this very district they had their own beautiful legend of the visit paid by Jupiter and Mercury to a country cottage, and told how they granted to Baucis and Philemon their hearts' desire. Barnabas and Paul had been mistaken by these people for the same gods paying a second visit, and Paul was thought to be Mercury, the "messenger" or "angel" of God (Acts xiv.). Now it is suggestive that St. Paul speaks twice of angels' visits in talking of his mission (Gal. i. 8, iv. 14), and alludes in a manner unusual to him to the story of the Incarnation, the way in which God came down to man (Gal. iv. 4). At the same time he reminds them that their devotion is to visible gods which have no spiritual existence, while he serves an invisible God, who is very real in personality and power (iv. 8).

In writing to people whose faith was of this simple description, it is interesting to remember that the words "faith," "believe," etc., occur twenty-six times in the six chapters.

There is, further, a homeliness in the way in which a country population thinks of its deities. To a countryman, God is usually a God of the fields. The god of these peasants

was represented on their monuments "as a husbandman subduing Nature for the benefit of man, holding in his hands the gifts which he offers to man—corn and grapes." Christ Himself had used the simile in speaking of His Father (John xv. 1; it is suggestive to compare Acts xiv. 15–17), and in this Epistle St. Paul speaks of the Spirit of God producing a harvest of fruit (Gal. v. 22), and reminds his hearers of the difference in the growths received by the man who sows to the Spirit or sows to the flesh. Harvesting is, so to speak, in the very atmosphere of the Epistle.

There is another and a discouraging feature which all who have worked in the country must have noticed, and that is a tendency after any new movement of life to slip back to the old ruts. St. Paul fights in this Epistle, as perhaps nowhere else, in order to prevent the Galatians from backsliding. Paganism dies hard in the country, as the very name "pagans" ("the people in the country districts") reminds us. I know of a case in the county where I am now living, where quite recently a family in distress repaired to the depth of a wood, and performed rites and ceremonies which they could not explain, to the full moon, in the hope of getting help, as

their ancestors two thousand years ago must have done.

What was the difficulty here? The Galatians had originally a religion which was elaborate in its ritual and fanatical in its religious manifestations. When St. Paul was among them he was opposed by the Jewish non-Christians, whose own ritual seemed beggarly and sordid in comparison with the gorgeous pagan rites. The Galatians had chosen Paul's way of spiritual religion by preference. But no sooner had Paul gone, than there came some Jewish Christians who *talked* spiritually like Paul, but *acted* ritually like the Jews, and, moreover, began to undermine Paul's authority. This was confusing, and the danger lay here. This new form of Christianity which was offered to them was dangerously like their ancient modes of worship in some ways. It is not until this is properly apprehended that Gal. iv. 3–11 becomes clear and natural. They were tempted to change their name, but not their inmost way of thinking. "In order to illustrate the Galatian situation, let us suppose that, at the present day, a race which has been converted to Christianity by Protestant missionaries was soon after visited by Roman Catholic mis-

sionaries, and that it was strongly affected by the imposing ritual of that form of Christianity, and was 'quickly removing' to it." They would still bow to images, but the names would be different. They would still seek to be saved by a series of actions, though their form would be altered. They would still be dependent on a mediating priesthood, still have to purchase their own salvation. The new form might be seductive, because it required so little mental adjustment, but it would be powerless because it would give no heart-rest. They would have to labour to earn it; God intended it to be free. The countryman easily wears a yoke like his own oxen. Paul fights to give him a spirit which shall make him permanently free, but free to serve.

Ramsay thinks that the Epistle was written from Antioch in Syria, a very suitable place, especially when we consider the sectarian troubles both at Antioch and in Galatia. We should place it in regard to the Acts history at Acts xviii. 22. The date would therefore be the spring of A.D. 53.

Questions for Discussion

1. Sum up from the foregoing chapter what you understand to be the four most striking characteristics of rustic religious life, and what four points should be aimed at by the missionary in preaching to a country crowd.

2. "*The Suras of Northern Nigeria, among whom work has lately been begun, have a certain conception of a Supreme Being, who controls the world in some sense, sending or withholding children and rain, making crops grow, etc., but who, they think, takes no interest in men individually, and is unapproachable. They sacrifice fowls and goats as well as other food to ju-jus in cases of illness or repeated bereavement of children, and they perform the rite of circumcision with certain ceremonies and feasting and drinking. Death appears to be regarded as the end of all things.*" How would a missionary, using the Epistle to the Galatians, and Acts xiii., xiv., deal with these people in (*a*) confirming, (*b*) correcting, (*c*) completing their belief.

3. "*The deep-lying Orientalism,*" says Sir W. M. Ramsay, "*always recurs. The Western conqueror triumphs, and before he is aware, when he turns his back for a moment, his results have melted into the old type. It is Paul's experience and complaint here.*" Show the

importance (1) of educational work in regard to this phase of missions; (2) of the work of native catechists in country districts.

4. The late Canon Wolters of Palestine, writing of the recent revolution in Turkey said: "*Much has been gained. Retrogressive influences may make themselves felt here and there, and may even prevail for a time. But it is scarcely conceivable that the old state of things can return. The outlook is, so far, distinctly hopeful.*" In view of the Epistle to the Galatians and of Sir W. M. Ramsay's words in Question 3, what do you consider the most significant word in the above quotation, and what the danger to be prayed against?

5. A missionary itinerating in Chinese country districts writes: "*Two days later we reached a place called Guifuh Hsii, a country market-town. Here the curiosity and excitement of the country-people, who were attending the market, knew no bounds. I quickly went in and brought out a supply of Gospels. These sold rapidly, so I repeated the number. These were also disposed of. Then followed preaching to the crowd. In the evening we showed our lantern pictures. The attendance was much below our expectations: this was due to the fact that the people who had crowded in to hear us in the morning had returned to their homes in the country before evening.*" Do you think the missionary was disappointed at the smaller congregation when he understood

the cause of it? What general effect may we expect followed the preaching in Antioch, Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra, when we remember that they were market-towns also? What important advantage had our missionary over St. Paul in regard to the permanent effect of this casual seed-sowing?

6. A high-caste Bible-woman in Ceylon was asked, "What made you go and sit with those low-caste people?" She replied, "*I am serving under a great King, and I am under orders to leave no one out.*" Contrast with this the words of a Chinaman in a letter to one of our leading journals: "*Racial antagonism is prevalent over the whole universe, and is known in both ancient and modern times. The anti-foreign spirit is not peculiar to China.*" He then says that the remedy for China will be found in "*foreign learning,*" and "*foreign religion,*" but reminds the West that it can help China by removing the anti-foreign spirit from Western minds. What is St. Paul's teaching in this Epistle upon the point?

7. "*In the heathen temple there were no instructors, and no voluntary contributions for their support,*" says Professor Ramsay. What verse in this Epistle is designed to remedy this lack in the Galatian Church? What is its general importance in view of the fact that the first purely Gentile native congregation was formed at Pisidian Antioch, in Galatia?

ST. PAUL AND HIS CONVERTS

Programme

Aim: To see what special lessons the Epistle to the Galatians gives concerning a rural native Church invaded by erroneous teaching.

1. Hymn 129 or 104.
2. Read Acts xiv. 8–20.
3. Prayer (using Collect for St. Mark's Day, substituting "Word" for "Evangelist St. Mark," and second Good Friday Collect).
4. Deal with the Questions for Discussion. The Study Circle should try by previous reading to illustrate these from the current *Church Missionary Society Magazines* of the month.
5. Praise (concluding with use of the passage in the post-Communion Office beginning "*It is very meet, right, . . .*" the Whit-Sunday proper preface, and ending "*Glory be to Thee, O God most High*").
6. Hymn 153.
7. Prayer, and benediction.

(Further help may be obtained from Ramsay's art. "Galatians," in Hastings' *Bible Dict.* See also Ramsay's *Hist. Comment. on Galatians*; *St. Paul the Traveller*, ch. vi.; *Luke the Physician*, chs. iii., x.; *Pauline Studies*, ch. iii.)

ST. PAUL AND THE EPHESIANS

THE CREED OF DEATH AND THE SEED OF LIFE

"Proudly it stood by the Hindu town,
Changeless in spite of passing years,
That temple which nothing could e'er cast down.
But the townsmen's pride and the townsmen's boasts
Were not heard only by Hindu ears.
They were known by Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts.
Then, out of the forces within His call,
He chose the weakliest one of all—
A tiny seed,—and cast it down
On the top of the temple's granite wall.
From the tiny seed a tree has grown,
Thrusting asunder the blocks of stone.
The feeble spark of life which lay
In the seed is sweeping the place away.
False gods perish, and false creeds die,
While they that have held them faint and sigh.
One only there is who by touch divine
Can kindle a light in the sin-slain heart,
Can bring the blessing and kill the curse.
One only there is who to heights sublime
Can draw us, and teach us to take our part
In the plans of God for the universe.
'Tis the Prince of Life,—the Truth, the Way,
The Slayer of Darkness, the Bringer of Day—
The Holy Saviour whose gift unpriced
But awaits our asking—Jesus Christ."

S. E. Stokes
(*Abridged from "Life"*).

CHAPTER IV

ST. PAUL AND THE EPHESIANS

THE GOSPEL IN A HEATHEN CATHEDRAL CITY

THIS Epistle is probably, like that to the Galatians, a circular letter, but there is a completely different atmosphere about it. One was written amid the roar of battle, the other in the seclusion of a cell. One is full of anxious doubt, the other breathes holy confidence. The Epistle to the Ephesians was probably written from Rome A.D. 61, and its place in relation to the history of the Acts is ch. xxviii. 30, 31. It was probably addressed to churches which had been founded during St. Paul's two years at Ephesus (Acts xix. 10), and would comprise among others what we generally call the Seven Churches of the Revelation.

It is an interesting fact that in the Galatian

group of cities the tie was political; in the Ephesian the tie was religious, for all the neighbourhood had learned to look to the temple at Ephesus as a centre of influence. St. Paul therefore, to the Galatian Christians, uses the national argument, and speaks of them as the Israel of God (Gal. vi. 16). In this letter he dwells upon the spiritual affinity of all those who worship the same Deity, and calls them the whole family in heaven and earth (Eph. iii. 15). The province of Asia was the richest and wealthiest in the East; and in this province Ephesus was the chief city. But the general claim of Ephesus to influence was a religious one; its pre-eminence was very largely owing to its temple, and as the city stood at the junction of many branch-roads with the grand trunk-roads, its influence was very widely diffused. Many strangers came to pray for the favour of the Ephesian goddess. The atmosphere of the city, therefore, was very like that of Benares or Amritsar. So St. Paul, under that Divine guidance which is ever proving itself the highest strategy, made the Church of Christ at Ephesus a similar central point of religious influence. "Thus mightily did the Lord's message spread and triumph," is the way in which the

work is described (Acts xix. 19, 20; Weymouth).

The Epistle then, although general, has many features highly distinctive of the religious centre to which it was in the first instance committed for circulation.

1. We find great emphasis laid on devotion to a Deity. Heathen enthusiasm is a thing to direct, not to repress. The fanatical devotion of the Ephesians for their goddess might be turned to account for God. St. Paul was careful to show no disrespect for their religious ways, and in calming the riot of Acts xix. the town-clerk dwelt approvingly on this fact (xix. 37, R.V.). So in this Epistle St. Paul allows his own personal devotion to his Lord to have full sway. In 155 verses he uses the name "Christ" 46 times, "Lord" 22, "Jesus" 20. Note the three passages where he dwells lovingly upon the thought of Christ as the absolute Lord (i. 22, iv. 15, v. 23).

2. We find a complete approval of the principle that a common religion is a great unifying force. The temple at Ephesus knit the most diverse races together, because they all worshipped Diana (or Artemis). "In the mind of the ancients," says Sir William Ramsay, "no union of men, small

or great, good or bad, humble or honourable, was conceivable without a religious bond to hold it together." See how St. Paul in like manner speaks of unity in ii. 14, 15, 16, 18, iv. 4, 5, 6; and the comradeship and fraternity of Christians in Eph. ii. 12, 19, iii. 6. This idea had broken down St. Paul's racial prejudices without subduing his loyalty to his nation. He was not less of a Jew after he became a Christian, but only came to know better what Judaism really was. "The most marked and dangerous symptom of degeneration in modern civilisation is the strength of our racial antipathies." We may notice here too how St. Paul plays upon the figure which occupied so large a place in Ephesian thought. He repeatedly alludes to the spiritual temple which Christ is building, with strong foundations, and wide courts, and a Divine Tenant (Eph. ii. 20, 21, iii. 17, 18, and note also his use of the word "edify"—R.V. "building up"—in iv. 12, 16, 29).

3. The Epistle emphasises the reality of unseen powers. Ephesus was famed for its magical arts and practices, and, says Ramsay, "the superstition of all Asia was centred there." Every new form of it was welcomed, and becoming acclimatised swelled the influence of

the priests. These teachings are spoken of by St. Paul as the " wiles of error " (iv. 14, R.V.), and are clearly marked in the story of Acts xix. The apostle points out in this letter that these unseen powers are the servants of the prince of the power of the air (ii. 2), and that the real stress of the conflict with the darker side of heathenism lies here (vi. 12). It is not the idol, but the demon behind it which makes our work so difficult. But there are also pure and noble unseen agents of God. Whereas, however, the Ephesians sought to gain unlawful knowledge for themselves through their intercourse with the unseen, Paul conceives that the unseen powers are to learn spiritual truths through us (iii. 10). He turns the desires of the Ephesians into a healthier channel. We are not the pupils, but the unconscious teachers of the angels.

4. The letter dwells upon the gains of a convert to Christ. The most sensitive part of civilised man is his pocket, and one of the fiercest fights the missionary has to wage is when his preaching touches the pockets of his hearers. Many tradesmen got their living from the crowds of devotees at Ephesus. They required entertainment, food, amusement, victims for sacrifice, offerings to dedi-

cate, curiosities, and images for worship, to carry home. This is clearly seen in several passages in Acts xix. The converts might willingly lay down even costly things for Christ's sake, but the heathen lost something as well as the Christians, and that because of Christianity. An illustration from home politics may help us here. "The Church may be properly eager to close public-houses," says Dr. Denney,[1] "but what it has mainly to remember is that they would all close automatically within the briefest of time-limits, if nobody went in." If a wave of temperance swept England, and this were to occur, the rage of the publican would be directed not against the Government but against the Church. This was happening in Ephesus. So in this Epistle St. Paul speaks of the compensation which comes from Christ—how financial loss is more than balanced by heavenly wealth (i. 7, 18, ii. 7, and iii. 8, 16). This probably explains also the thought in v. 5 ("no money-grubber, or in other words, idol-worshipper, has any share awaiting him in the kingdom of Christ."—Weymouth).

5. St. Paul dwells upon the practical effect of devotion on duty. "The rules of life,"

[1] *The Church and the Kingdom*, p. 129.

says Ramsay, "were placed under a Divine guardianship because there was no other way of enforcing them on all." Practical household wisdom was expressed in the form of a system of household religious rites. This is one reason why education without religion usually demoralises a heathen nation. Any bond is better than none. So St. Paul shows that the devotion of the Christian means duty as well as reverence. The God whom he serves has a road of good works for him to walk in (ii. 10). He contrasts this way of light with the old road of darkness (iv. 17–19), and then in a long series of maxims (v. 22–vi. 9) he gives the laws of the family as God would have it to be.

6. St. Paul insists upon the diffusive effect of Christian devotion. Heathen religions are often wide-spreading, but seldom missionary. In one fine passage here the apostle tells us that a great treasure is entrusted to unworthy recipients in order that it may reach the whole world (iii. 8, 9; see also vi. 19, 20).

7. He dwells upon the honour and privilege of the service of God. The proud boast of Ephesus was that she was care-taker and temple-sweeper for her goddess. The priests directed practically everything in the city.

St. Paul, speaking Greek like the Greeks, and having received an education which embraced Greek culture, throws himself into their mental position, and shows that the Christian Church is no less proud to be the bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and that various ranks of service, all animated by one Spirit, are found ministering to one spiritual temple (iv. 11, 12).

8. He defines the true place of the feminine idea in the scheme of God. The greatest feature of the worship of Ephesus was the motherhood of the Divine nature. In all probability the origin of the worship of the mother and child which strayed into the Christian Church through Romanism arose in Ephesus. In practically every heathen religion men have made the error of demanding a goddess to worship, through failing to grasp the all-embracing character of God's nature. The most tender features of motherhood are all to be found in the love of God. Christ the Saviour is not *a* man, but Man, comprehending as the second Adam all the essentials of masculine and feminine, as Gen. ii. pictures in the case of the first Adam.

This is important for the Church at home to bear in mind. It is of pressing urgency in the mission field. There is a feminine notion

in the spiritual scheme which God has revealed to us, but it is to be found in humanity, not deity. The feminine idea is subjection, not sovereignty, and this relation is that of the living Church towards Christ. He leads, guards, directs : she (in one phase at any rate) is guided, kept, cherished. This may seem irrelevant or abstruse or mystical, but no one who sees deeply into the causes of religious error in the world should have any difficulty in estimating the value of Eph. v. 26–32 as a section of missionary teaching. The hunger of man and especially of woman for mother-love in worship is best satisfied in Christ, the one Mediator, who spoke of His love for us under the mother-simile of the bird and her nestlings.

Questions for Discussion

1. "The United Church paper," says a Chinese missionary journal, "is already becoming a link of unity; but, what is more important, this corporate union will show to Christians that they are members of more than the local body." Quote passages from the Ephesians which illustrate this statement.

2. "At Shaou-Hing in Mid-China, where many of the people are dependent for their

living upon the manufacture of paper money to be used in the worship of their gods or ancestors, hearts were as hard as adamant." What do you suppose is the hindering cause? Show from the Acts that the same influences were at work in the history of the Ephesian mission.

3. "At the *Melas*, or religious fairs, in India, the workers found many opportunities, and often when the pilgrims were too bent on accomplishing their devotions to listen to any preaching, they were yet ready to accept some leaflet through which it may be they will be brought to the knowledge of Christ." How does this compare with the situation at Ephesus? Wherein has the Indian missionary to-day an advantage which St. Paul lacked? And what advantage had St. Paul in speaking, which the missionary only overcomes with difficulty?

4. "At Pakhoi, in South China, a man who had recovered from sickness presented the hospital with a handsome tablet, bearing characters which signified, '*China with outsiders one large family*'; and asked that it might be put up where the out-patients should see and read it, so that all might understand that the missionaries desired to make Christ known to rich and poor." Write a short paper with this passage as text, dealing with the history of British intercourse with China,

and showing wherein Chinese ideas had advanced before the tablet could have been tolerated. Show also how the Epistle to the Ephesians illustrates this question.

5. The Japanese Minister of Education has confessed that the teaching of secular national ethics has failed of its purpose as a training in morals, and that something more is needed. Contrast with this the foundation of morals laid in this Epistle.

6. In a recent Japanese newspaper appeared a cartoon representing two congregations, one Buddhist and the other Christian. In the former, the preacher is aged; so likewise the congregation. Both were clothed in old-fashioned garments, and were seated in old Japanese style. The bent backs and downcast eyes, betokening the submissive attitude of the congregation, were suggestive alike of Buddhism and of old Japan. In the latter, the Christian congregation, the preacher was young and stood upright, his gesture representing energy and conviction. The congregation consisted of young people dressed in up-to-date clothing. They were sitting erect, with eyes fastened on the preacher. An air of expectancy and hope pervaded the picture. In view of this and the quotation in Question 6, do you expect Japan to retrace her steps in finding a religious base of morals? If not, what call appears to be made to us, her allies?

Programme

Aim: To see what the Epistle to the Ephesians teaches about missionary work in a centre of heathen worship and pilgrimage.

1. Hymn 107 or 136.
2. Reading of Eph. ii. 11–22 by one of the Circle.
3. Prayer (including that for "all sorts and conditions of men").
4. Question the Circle briefly about the eight leading points named in the chapter.
5. Collect for St. Simon and St. Jude's Day, and two extempore prayers.
6. Answer Questions 1, 2, and 3.
7. Paper on Question 4, with short discussion.
8. Answer briefly Questions 5 and 6.
9. Prayer.
10. Hymn 94 or 95.
11. Benediction.

(Further help may be gained from Ramsay's art. "Ephesus," in Hastings' *Bible Dict.* See also *St. Paul the Traveller*, ch. xii.; *Letters to Seven Churches*, chs. x., xiv., xvi., xvii.; *Luke the Physician*, ch. iii.; *Pauline Studies*, ch. v.)

ST. PAUL AND THE PHILIPPIANS

CALVARY AND ITS CALL TO SERVICE

"So having fed me first
And slaked my thirst,—
Thou biddest me to serve that Thou mayst eat;
'Child, hast thou any meat?'
I go to seek the meat that pleaseth Thee;
To do the Will of Him who sendeth me.

Thou sayest this sad day 'I thirst' again,
And I—remembering how to ease Thy pain
Some harsh-faced Roman, stained and seared with war,
Gave Thee his vinegar,
(And earned a fuller comfort than he gave,)—
Go forth to seek for Thee, at Thy behest,
Not only such suave souls as please me best,
But rough, sour souls that Thou didst parch to save."

A. S. CRIPPS (*Lyra Evangelistica*).

CHAPTER V

ST. PAUL AND THE PHILIPPIANS

THE GOSPEL IN A COLONY

ST. PAUL'S missionary aim was to be all things to all men, if he might only save souls in the end. He has written to a metropolis, to a port, to a country district, to a heathen place of pilgrimage, and now in this Epistle he has a message for a colony. The letter was written from Rome during St. Paul's first imprisonment, and it is placed in the history of the Acts at xxviii. 30. The date is probably A.D. 60 or 61. Philippi was a typical Roman colony. Several other towns were that, but it possessed distinct privileges, and may be regarded as the best class of colony. St. Paul has a special line of thought, and appropriate topical arguments, here as in all his other writings. In Philippi, of course, as elsewhere, the worship of Cæsar was duly

observed. The reigning Emperor was regarded as incarnate God in human form on earth, and the worship included that of deceased Emperors who had returned to heaven. So it is striking to find that here St. Paul speaks of Jesus Christ as the Son of heaven who came in human form to earth, who has the name above every earthly name, to whom all kings bow, who occupies a throne of universal dominion, and who is expected to return one day from heaven (Phil. ii. 5–11, iii. 20). Again, to this church in a peaceful garrison-town St. Paul speaks of a peace that garrisons the heart under the rule of Christ (iv. 7). In the town where he first asserted his rights as a Roman citizen he speaks of the privileges of Christian citizenship (Acts xvi. 37 ; Phil. iii. 20, R.V.).

There is, of course, a very wide difference between a Roman and a British colony. The one was an armed occupation, the other is probably the freest of all the governments which history has to show. The one made for inertia, the other for the finest of hardy characters. Yet there are some points in common which we may helpfully study.

Again, not all colonial life is in touch with missionary possibilities. Many a colonial city has few marks to distinguish it from those in

the homeland. But in many of our Colonies the native question is a burning one, and wherever our pioneers come in contact with aboriginal inhabitants, there is the greatest of openings for hindrance or help to the extension of the kingdom of Christ. St. Paul, writing to the Philippian "outpost of Empire," speaks of himself as "posted on sentry duty to defend the Gospel" (Phil. i. 17, lit.). The simile is a favourite one with us to-day in imperial matters. Let our colonial brethren never forget that they are equally the advanced pickets of the King of kings, if they are His at all.

1. *The Colonist everywhere has a passion for reproducing the life of the homeland, even in the most trivial details—the more pathetic in proportion to their triviality.*—The Philippians did so. Mr. Turner speaks of Philippi as a fresh representation of the Roman people in miniature, while Ramsay speaks of "a fragment of Rome, cut off in space from the whole body, but preserving its vitality and self-identity as fully as when it was joined to the whole, and capable of reuniting with the whole as soon as the estranging space was annihilated." So St. Paul reminds Philippian Christians that their real home-centre was heaven (Phil. iii. 20),

to which they would one day be reunited, and then proceeds to show how in the most practical duties of daily life, in thought, word, and action, they are to show their heavenly home and origin (i. 27), and make a "fresh representation" of heaven "in miniature." They are, as he says, to shine as lights in a dark world (ii. 14, 15). This is a very suggestive truth for all colonial life in its missionary bearing. On all hands we hear, not only thankfulness for consistent lives, but also, alas! the awful possibilities of hindrance to the progress of the Gospel among heathen in such places as Western Canada, South Africa, Uganda, New Zealand, from the inconsistent behaviour of white (and to the native presumably Christian) men. The possibilities for good or harm from inconsistent "globe-trotters" are small in comparison with those of the permanent resident. The very intimate knowledge which comes of domestic service, for instance, may show to an unsuspecting native the flaws in conduct of a family he has judged to be Christian, just as surely as it may reveal to an employer feebleness of character in one who belongs to a Mission Church in the "location" or "reserve."

2. *There is a perfectly natural tendency to*

selfishness in the hard struggle of a typical colonial life.—The temptation is, of course, universal, but this most strenuous of lives may easily make men careless of the needs of others. So St. Paul tells them that while it is usual to think only of self (ii. 21), they as colonists of heaven are to think not only of their own concerns, but also of the things of others, and he twice emphasises the word *each* (Phil. ii. 4), that they may realise that none is exempt. He bids them to hold *forth* the word of life (ii. 16), as well as hold it fast. He reminds them that he himself was only too willing to be a sacrificial cup, emptied for their thirst (ii. 17), and speaks of that unselfish colonial missionary who had come to serve him so courageously at the risk of his own health (ii. 25–30). He prays that the river of their love may not be content to flow in its own channels, but may overflow so that others may be refreshed from it (i. 9–11). Has this always been remembered in our colonial life? The native has sometimes been sacrificed, but has seen too little sacrificed for him. He has served, but has he often received Christian service? The race-problem bristles with difficulties. The colour-question is often part of a heritage left to a colony by the vice of its

worst members. But the Lord who will have every knee to bow in His name has a solution, if we only remember that the Gospel must be held out to all, and that it is the power unto salvation for Kaffir and Malay, Kanaka and Maori, Indian and "blackfellow."

3. *Akin to this is the matter of monetary aid.*—There are so many pressing claims in a colony where everything has to be developed, that "outsiders" are apt to be regarded as entirely negligible. Philippi had not taken this standpoint. St. Paul speaks in the warmest terms of the way in which they remembered outside claims amid their own urgent needs (iv. 10–16). He says that their sacrifice had the fragrance of Calvary (compare iv. 18 with Eph. v. 2), and pleads that his drain upon their pockets is really intended to increase their accumulated interest in the bank of heaven (iv. 17, "fruit" is a banker's term for "interest"). The Colonial Church Missionary Associations have all the distinctive traits of this Philippian sacrifice. Let them never be judged quixotic, as being blind to the best interests of a colony. Colonies get benefits from mission work. One of the latest recruits to a Missionary College in India is a young colonial clergyman who was converted to God through the testi-

mony in Australia of two Kanaka Christians. Missionary self-forgetfulness never robs itself in the final issue.

4. *There is special allusion in this Epistle to the circumstances of the women in the colony at Philippi.*—They were given special prominence, and their influence is historic. The same feature is reflected in the life of the Church. It is to be read in Acts xvi. It appears in Phil. iv. 2, 3. When the tale of our own colonial life comes to be written, the chapter which deals with the courage and endurance of our colonial women will be a record of heroism second to none in the history of the world; and their position is full of missionary possibility just in proportion to the strength of their Christian character.

5. *There is a counsel of warning in this letter against misuse of esprit de corps.*—This may be delightful or hateful, just as it exhibits itself in our bearing to others. The Philippian colonists were almost ludicrously conceited about their origin. St. Paul bids their racial strifes be still, their denominational wranglings to end, as they recall the way in which the Lord, whose genealogy was divine, whose position was royal, emptied Himself for others (ii. 3, 14, iv. 2, and see ii. 5–8).

Pride of race is wholesome, but it can be abused. If it means racial antipathy, it blights instead of blessing a colony. Devotion to a Church is admirable, but if it means denominational arrogance which cannot bear that any one else should preach Christ, it paralyses the spiritual vitality of a colonial Christianity (i. 18).

"He emptied Himself, and God exalted Him," is written of the Master. Let the servants never forget it. St. Paul speaks with regret of the days of his own denominational self-importance (iii. 4–8). Well for us if we lay his counsel to heart. Rivalries of cities come under the same dangerous heading: none of our large colonial dominions are exempt from the danger, as the history of the past years shows. "Philippi," says Professor Ramsay, "was ranked first by its own consent, Amphipolis by general consent." There is good sense as well as humour in the epigram. Christianity has the nobler lesson of *being second by our own consent.* Willing humility is the first Christian grace.

Questions for Discussion

1. What passages in the Epistle are illustrated by the following instances?—

(*a*) "If a man had Christ he could do anything. He would be like a man who possessed an inexhaustible well, and who could keep drawing vessel after vessel of water out of it to slake the thirst of as many as came near him, without any fear of his well running dry" (said by an Indian heathen).

(*b*) "It is too wonderful to believe! Only a few weeks ago I was living a sad, discontented life, and now I am overflowing with joy. I had often heard that Christians had great joy, and I wondered what it meant, and how it could be, but now I know" (said by a Japanese).

(*c*) "In 1906 Read was convinced his working days were numbered, and dedicated 10s. a week to the missionary box for his last year (as he thought) of earning £3 a week, as a thank-offering for sixty-eight years of healthy, busy life. That year he put in £34. The next year, instead of being retired, he was asked to stay on another year, much to his surprise and delight. 'Praise the Lord,' he said. 'I gave Him 10s. a week, and He replies with £3 a week'" (a railway porter's zeal).

(*d*) An agnostic teacher in a Japanese school was so struck with the spirit of unity in the teachers' room that she asked for instruction in Christianity.

*2. It was urged against our Christianity by a Chinaman in a letter to a daily paper that racial antagonism was barring out Chinese and Japanese from Australia, Canada, and South Africa. Discuss the economic question from the Christian standpoint taken in this Epistle and elsewhere by St. Paul.

3. " The majority of the Indians in North-West Canada have by this time embraced Christianity, and the work among them is largely pastoral."

" At Moose Fort neither magistrate, policeman, nor jail is needed among five thousand scattered Indians."

" The Metlakahtla Christians raised sufficient to defray all current church expenses and to give two hundred dollars to the Mission fund of the Diocese " (extracts from *C.M.S. Report*, 1909).

What bearing have these results upon the words of a colonial employer who asked a native seeking employment, " Are you a Christian ? " " Yes." " Then get out."

4. " Bishop Stringer speaks of the miners

and traders at Teslin Lake as setting a good example by their consistent lives."

"At Lac Seul some of the men employed on the railway tempted the Indians to sell their very souls for whisky, and their daughters' honour as well."

"At Metlakahtla the Indians have been tempted to Sabbath desecration through the Sunday excursionists." "The Indians have been discontented at beholding their territories passing into the hands of others" (extracts from *C.M.S. Report*, 1909).

What verses in Philippians describe respectively the two types of white men concerned? What call do these accounts make upon the Colonial Churches?

5. Is it desirable to have separate churches for whites and coloured people in a colony? Give arguments on both sides of the question.

*6. What difficulties do you think have operated to make a native episcopate possible in West Africa, and so far unknown in India? Is it desirable to perpetuate this?

Programme

Aim : To see what light the Epistle to the Philippians throws upon the dangers, responsibilities, and privileges of colonial life when in contact with heathen and native Christians.

1. Hymn 149.
2. Prayer (including Collects for Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity and All Saints' Day).
3. Deal with Questions 1 and 2.
4. Prayer by two members.
5. Answer Questions 3 and 4.
6. Confession and thanksgiving for sins and victories in British dealing with natives.
7. Discuss Questions 5 and 6.
8. Hymn 221.
9. Benediction.

(Further help in Turner's art. "Philippi," in Hastings' *Bible Dict.*; Ramsay's *St. Paul the Traveller*, chs. ix., x.; *Pauline Studies*, ch. iii.)

ST. PAUL AND THE COLOSSIANS

A NATIVE BAPTISM

" Dread Potter, in Thine Hands we lay,
Thine Image made—and marred—in clay.
First, in Thy timely mercy, break,
Then all re-make.

These votive waters wait Thee here—
'Twixt rocks and greensward, deep and clear:
Water and Dust we give for share,
Give Fire and Air!

That Tree Thou barest lit for earth
Her Furnace flame of cleansing worth:
In crimson Hollow of Thine Hand
That Flame be fanned!

Breathe, Air, from out the Land Desired,
Breathe till this glowing clay be fired:
According to Thy primal plan
Create a man!"

A. S. CRIPPS (*Lyra Evangelistica*).

CHAPTER VI

ST. PAUL AND THE COLOSSIANS

THE GOSPEL IN AN OUT-STATION

THE Church at Colossæ is an illustration of the reproductive power of the Gospel. The Colossians were the spiritual grandchildren of St. Paul, the converts of his converts. He had never seen them himself (ii. 1); and they had been brought to Christ through Epaphras, aided, probably, by Nymphas and Philemon (i. 7, iv. 12, 15, and cf. Philem. 1, 2 and Col. iv. 17). Colossæ was not an important town at this time, though it had a great position in earlier history. Laodicea had now eclipsed it in wealth and glory. But its position was influential, nevertheless. It stood on the most important route of commerce and intercourse in the eastern part of the Roman Empire; it was, therefore, a place where new ideas and new thoughts were always likely to

be simmering. Epidemics are apt to follow the course of the wind, and in like manner false teaching generally follows the course of the road. The city was all the more liable to welcome this, because the life of the town was less active than it had been. So the Colossians were likely to be susceptible to a novelty, even if erroneous. Colossæ is also specially interesting as one of those towns where East and West have been able to meet and fuse, in spite of the general opinion to the contrary.

The result of these conditions upon the teaching and beliefs in the church at Colossæ was very much what might have been expected. They had received the Gospel at second-hand, and it is possible that it had not been stated with quite the emphasis and clearness of St. Paul. Thus when the subtle tug of the Orient began to be felt, the spiritual constitution of the Church was likely to suffer. So St. Paul speaks of having special anxiety about it (i. 29, ii. 1). The danger was a kind of spiritualism, springing from an attempt to express the ideas of Christianity in the terms and forms of the local current religious thought, and these statements in modern terms, while possibly necessary, are always

perilous. The Colossians were highly developed in mind, and their province had the finest education which the Greek system had developed, says Professor Ramsay, but this in itself was no guarantee of true Christian teaching. An Indian paper has lately said that " it is necessary to recognise the radically irreligious nature of the pure intellect, though it is seldom honestly avowed." There is much force in the truth of the statement. But St. Paul did not, and we must not, underrate the enormous value of a consecrated intellect. St. Paul never cut off his teaching from the philosophy of his time. He regarded it as distinctly less dangerous than idolatry, and he often used its terms in an amended sense. So he prays here for the Colossians that they may have fresh light upon what they already possessed—" fuller knowledge " as the word literally means (i. 9 and 28). The remedy for error is not less theology, but better theology. He wants them " to have a clear conviction " (iv. 12, Weymouth; and see R.V.), and when they are convinced he wants them to be able to answer objections (iv. 6).

The Epistle is a fine example of the way in which a missionary may train raw converts in the way of right thinking. He gives them

much positive teaching, but he does not forget to deal with their errors. These were mostly superficial and shallow. St. Paul calls them "idle fancies following human traditions and the world's crude notions" (ii. 8, Weymouth). He deals with some of the special features in ii. 18,—self-mortification, spirit-worship, claims to visions,—and boldly says they are "idly puffed up with unspiritual thoughts" (ii. 18, Weymouth). This was probably a shock to them, as they claimed spirituality; but there is all the difference between the French "spirituel" and the English "spiritual," though many forget it. These "rudimentary notions" (ii. 20, Weymouth) are deprecated in strong terms, and the false asceticism which was always priding itself on its extreme abstinence is shown to be merely a man-made system. St. Paul calls it "self-imposed worship," "affected humility," and says it is "utterly useless in combating the indulgence of our lower natures." (ii. 23, Weymouth).

We may compare similar dangers to-day in the mission field where Buddhistic restrictions, Hindu theosophy, and Mohammedan prayer-forms, or even Roman proselytising attempts, menace the young and inexperienced

converts. Still the Church as a whole was sound (ii. 5), and St. Paul leads them to see that victory is gained, not by fighting the body, but by a resurrection-power in the mind and soul (iii. 1, 2), a transforming of taste. For all such questionings he says they may have "a reasonable certainty" (ii. 2, Weymouth), and repeatedly tells them that Christ is the real answer to all their difficulties (ii. 3). Instead of the Oriental creed of despair, Christ has a Gospel of hope (i. 5, 23, 27); instead of the fine classifications of the Greek mystics, there is a purpose of God for the whole world (i. 6, 23); instead of the racial barriers, God has a universal brotherhood (iii. 11). But the apostle very rightly dwells with repeated force upon the argument from the changed life; he appeals to their remembrance of the change in themselves (i. 13, 21, 22), as a piece of evidence for the power of the old Gospel which is quite irresistible; and pleads that their conduct shall be the best Christian evidence before the eyes of their fellows (i. 4, 10, iii. 5–10, iv. 5). The whole Epistle presses home the principle which was finely phrased in an Indian newspaper leader the other day: "The successful moral teacher of the day must have not only the learning

of the professor, but also the insight of a prophet, and he must feel the call of an apostle."

There can be no doubt that such teaching is needed not only wherever a native Church is threatened with error, but in every place where the educational system of a nation is in the moulding. A great civil servant said recently that "The prosperity of India was menaced by a faulty system of education, which too generally excludes the development of the practical side of the minds of Indian youth, and tends to encourage speculative thought, which may be necessary for the few, but is enervating and sometimes dangerous for the many"; while a leader in *The Hindu Patriot* said: "The policy of non-interference in religious matters has been carried too far; that a godless education is in great measure responsible for the present disloyal attitude of a certain section of the community cannot be gainsaid, and the sooner it is done away with the better."

When we turn to Japan, we find yearnings which have not been spiritually or mentally satisfied. "She is asking wistfully for the undiscovered good. Her patriotism and her solidity preserve her from social and political

unrest: but not the less unrestful is the nation at heart."

Similar intellectual openings present themselves in China, where "the extraordinary changes in their historic system of education, and the eagerness with which the Chinese people are seeking for Western knowledge, present a unique opportunity for the Church of Christ. Think of the fact that a daily newspaper is published in Pekin exclusively for the women, and try to estimate the enormous change such a fact implies."

Turning to that unrestful Protectorate of ours, Egypt, we find that "at Khartoum and Omdurman the Government only allows the Church Missionary Society to carry on its schools on the condition that the parents are at liberty, if they wish, to withdraw their children from the Bible-teaching; but very few of the people, who are either Egyptians in Government service or Soudanese or Jews, take the trouble to do so." Again, at Atbara, "a number of Egyptian officers and employés in Government offices and at the railway works not long since preferred a request that the Society should open a school for their children, promising, if an English lady were sent, to pay all the expenses, excepting her

salary, and actually suggesting that the Bible should be taught."

So in Palestine, where a circular was recently issued by Moslems to their own countrymen for an education that should satisfy: "Oh, fellow-countrymen, we are sinking fast into seas of ignorance; stretch out a helping hand and show us how to rise! Hasten! if you delay, we shall be drowned—or, in other words—we shall sink in slavery. Ignorance is the only foe which can strangle a nation's life. We are your offspring, have pity upon us and help us!"

We shall then, as we survey these various fields, realise the claim of the non-Christian world for a Gospel message which shall show that Christ Jesus can meet every need of spirit and mind and physical frame.

It is striking to notice that St. Paul takes the worship of the Emperor, which Ramsay says was the "one and only Asian bond of unity," and transfers it here, as elsewhere, to Christ. Loyalty to our Lord will keep any nation true to its own governors, and will knit it into a fellowship with all others beside. The passages in which St. Paul sums up the characteristics which make Christ the worthy

centre of our spiritual solar system, and the results which come from a true and maintained orbit, are well worth pondering (see i. 16–20, ii. 10, iii. 11, 17, 24); and while he emphasises in the fullest way the Person and the Incarnation of Christ, let it never be forgotten that, in establishing truth and combating error, St. Paul makes the Cross of Christ the bond by which all union is cemented, and the force by which all opposing powers are vanquished (i. 20, ii. 15). So may the story of this decaying post-town of twenty centuries ago, with its temptation to novelty-hunting in worship and compromise in doctrine, lead us to ponder the truths which are the true life-centre of any mission station, and the real safeguard against any falsehood, however fascinating.

Questions for Discussion

1. "Be fair, be charitable, be Christlike. But let there be no mistake; let it be made absolutely clear that Christianity cannot, must not, be watered down to suit the palate of either Hindu, Parsee, Confucianist, Buddhist, or Mohammedan, and that whosoever wishes to pass from the false religion to the true

can never hope to do so by the rickety planks of compromise, or by help of faltering hands held out by half-hearted Christians. He must leap the gulf in faith, and the living Christ will land him safely on the Eternal Rock." These are the words of Sir M. Monier Williams, the distinguished Orientalist. Compare them with St. Paul's statements in this Epistle about Christ and other systems.

2. After stating that in the Christian Church there are no racial distinctions, St. Paul says, "Put on therefore meekness" (Col. iii. 12). "'Sir,' said a Hindu student, after reading one of the Beatitudes, 'The Englishman may inherit the earth, but if you call him meek he would be insulted.'" Was the Hindu right in his verdict, and where does the real weight of the charge begin? Is it inconsistency, or inadequate conception of true Christianity, which makes the Englishman lack meekness. Estimate the effect on Indian missions, supposing the opinion to be general.

3. A Hindu pundit, describing his conversion, said "that after reading the Christian Scriptures, the daily ceremonies which he as a Vaishnavite scrupulously observed, his fastings, attendances at the religious festivals with which each month ends, and caste etiquette and distinctions, palled upon his taste. The paltry subterfuges and atonements which are found in Hinduism were useless and vain."

Compare this with similar statements of St. Paul in this Epistle.

4. In a Hindu law case between Christians and Hindus, a native pastor had to give evidence, and did so. The lawyer on the other side was asked if he had any question to put. This lawyer, who was unprepared for a perfectly true witness, replied that he had nothing to say. The case was decided then in favour of the Christians by the Hindu magistrate, on the sole evidence of the man who was known to tell the truth. Compare this with St. Paul's injunction to native Christians in this Epistle.

5. A missionary was filled with nervousness in prospect of a language examination. An old Christian pundit asked, "Why this fear? God is." Show how St. Paul similarly uses the fact of the Person of Christ to strengthen the converts at Colossæ.

6. What place does St. Paul give to the work of the Holy Spirit in this Epistle, in the matter of establishing and correcting the tone of their Christianity?

7. What passages in the Epistle illustrate the following?—

(*a*) "'Why, sir,' an Indian said, 'Christianity changes people's lives. We people are notorious for taking bribes; but if a man becomes a Christian he ceases to do this.'"

(*b*) " The village watchman asked two of the congregation to go and act as night-watchmen at the house of a rich Hindu whose place had been robbed the night before. Said he, 'The Hindu says he wants Christians, because he can trust them.' "

(*c*) " It was very refreshing on one occasion to hear a young subaltern praising his Christian servant in most glowing terms. He entrusts him with his pay, and his wife even leaves the key of her jewel-case in his care. Equally refreshing was it to see a Colonel of the Royal Engineers and his wife, bringing their Christian ayah to church with them in their carriage, and all kneeling side by side at the Lord's Table. Another case was that of a Government official—an Indian Civil Service man—who saw his head-clerk in church, and learned for the first time that he was a Christian (a converted Brahman), whereupon the officer poured into my delighted ears an account of his clerk's exceptional ability and devotion to duty, adding that he was the best subordinate he had ever employed (extracts from *Church Missionary Society Report*).

(*d*) In a certain institution where the manufacture of bombs was taught, a special study was also made of the Hindu Scriptures; or, as a missionary tersely puts it: " The sacred Vedas were studied in the morning, and the art of assassination in the evening."

ST. PAUL AND THE COLOSSIANS

Programme

Aim: To see what lesson the Epistle to the Colossians has for an out-station where the native Christians have been disturbed by a teaching which is a mixture of truth and error.

1. Hymn 59.
2. Read St. John xvii. 11–21.
3. Prayer (including Collects for Third Sunday after Easter, and Whit-Sunday).
4. Talk over the first two Questions.
5. Prayer for definiteness of faith and rightness of ideals.
6. Deal with Questions 3, 4, and 5.
7. Prayer for consistency of conduct.
8. Deal with Questions 6 and 7.
9. Hymn 154.
10. Benediction.

(Further help in Ramsay's art. "Colossæ," and Murray's art. "Colossians," in Hastings' *Bible Dict.*; Ramsay, *Paul the Traveller*, chs. xii., xv.)

ST. PAUL AND THE THESSALONIANS

A LIGHT UNTO THE GENTILES

"Ye whose hearts are fresh and simple
Who have faith in God and Nature,
Who believe, that in all ages
Every human heart is human,—
That in even savage bosoms
There are longings, yearnings, strivings,
For the good they comprehend not,—
That the feeble hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God's right hand in that darkness,
And are lifted up and strengthened:—
Listen!"

LONGFELLOW ("Hiawatha").

CHAPTER VII

ST. PAUL AND THE THESSALONIANS

THE GOSPEL IN AN INDEPENDENT STATE

THE letters to Thessalonica are probably the first of the New Testament Epistles in point of time, and were written from Corinth about the year 52. Their place in the history of the Acts is ch. xviii. 11. Thessalonica was an important city in position and influence, but its special interest as a type for us lies in the fact that it was self-governing. That is to say that, like many of our States in India, it was ruled by its own officials under the eye of an Imperial Resident, without a military occupation by a garrison. And although Thessalonica was strictly speaking a city and not a State, its position and freedom corresponded to those of a native State to-day. It must be remembered that in Roman times

the feeling of an ancient citizen to his own city was much stronger than that which is in modern times entertained usually towards one's native town. All the feeling of patriotism which now binds us to our country, irrespective of the town to which we belong, was in ancient times directed towards one's city.[1] We have, then, to consider what special features would be observed in the working of the Gospel in such surroundings, and how they bear on similar conditions in native States within the Empire to-day, or in other non-Christian systems of rule.

1. There would be a feverish anxiety to maintain every appearance of unstained loyalty. In a recent tour made by the Viceroy of India, his speeches to native princes contained many such phrases as the following: "The history of Your Highness's family is one of unbroken loyalty." "Every one who contrasts the India of pre-British days with what we now find, must agree with Your Highness that, under British rule, the Princes and Chiefs of India have obtained a fair field for steady progress under their own administration."[2] The conditions in Roman days must have been very

[1] Ramsay.

[2] Extracts from *The Times of India.*

similar. The Imperial Government was very jealous of the rights of popular assemblies in self-governing States, and we see in the history of Acts xvii. how St. Paul's use of the terms "Kingdom" and "Lord," in speaking of Christ and Christianity, was misunderstood, so that in the eyes of the rulers it became perverted into a policy of sedition. "The very suggestion of treason against an Emperor often proved fatal against the accused. Many a man was ruined by such a charge under the earlier Emperors." [1] This feeling led to the steps by which St. Paul was excluded from Thessalonica, and it is partly this which underlies the strong language in 2 Thess. ii., if we consider it in its bearing upon the current history of that time, while not forgetting that it has also a prophetic aspect (and contrast 1 Thess. ii. 12). The Aga Khan, a few months ago, assured the Viceroy of "the co-operation of all Princes in the extirpation of the noxious growths of *lawlessness and anarchy* in India." When we remember that the Thessalonian officials had probably spoken in similar terms of Christianity, it will help us to understand St. Paul's vigorous, though veiled, retort, that the heathen spirit of the Empire, and the

[1] Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller*, p. 229.

worship of the Emperors, was the real lawlessness and anarchy (2 Thess. ii. 3–12, R.V.). It must, however, be remembered in common fairness that even where Christian principles are preached in the most law-abiding manner, they are bound to disintegrate many of the ways and customs of a State which is conducted on non-Christian lines. Sir William Ramsay has recently stated that when Abdul Hamid encouraged American schools he was thereby giving the death-blow to his own unrighteous rule, while "the European (chiefly English) governesses instilled into their pupils ideas and habits which were incompatible with slavery to a despot." This has a striking interest for us in connection with our Epistles, in that the words are written partly about the Thessalonica of to-day.

2. Another natural feature in a native State is that there will be less of the atmosphere of even indirectly Christian influence. Public opinion would view with toleration many things which would be impossible in a nominally Christian country. We get the impression from the Thessalonian Epistles that the bulk of the converts were from heathenism, and not Judaism. This means that their whole moral attitude would be radically altered, since it

had not had the preliminary training in right-mindedness which the Jewish faith would have given them. It makes their Christian consistency all the more admirable (1 Thess. i. 3).

Native religions would exhibit a far greater power in a primitive state. Idolatry would be more dense. St. Paul accordingly speaks of God as the "living and true" (1 Thess. i. 9), as opposed to the idols who were not merely "dead" in their inability to help, but "false" in the perverted ideas of religion which attached to them. St. Paul specially asserts that his gospel has no connection with uncleanness, because he remembers the foul orgies which the old religion had taught them to indulge in (1, iv. 3–7). We shall realise what it meant that, in spite of these drawbacks, Thessalonica was known until quite a late date as "the orthodox city," when we contrast, for instance, the way in which the Copts in Egypt, or the native Syrian Church of Malabar, became corrupt in their faith, by reason of the surrounding false religions; or, again, we see the same factors at work in the religion of Abyssinia, which calls itself Christian to this day.

3. The native priesthood would be a very

dominant force, and the power of the spirit of heathenism would pervade the whole population.

We should expect to find that outbursts of public feeling, perhaps of anti-foreign bias, were more dangerous. "The lower classes and the most enslaved to paganism on its vulgarest and most superstitious side were the most fanatical opponents of the new teaching."[1]

St. Paul dwells, therefore, with special delight upon the way in which they had transferred their religious adherence to the missionaries (1, i. 5, 6, ii. 13); he speaks of it as a proof of the way in which the Spirit of God was working in their midst, and disclaims the corrupt arts of a self-seeking priesthood (1, ii. 3–6). His emphasis on the Holy Spirit throughout these chapters is marked (see 1 Thess. i. 5, 6, iv. 8, v. 19; 2 Thess. ii. 13). "Hear a parable," said a Chinese catechist. "How many kinds of fans there are in this hot room, but all have one object, namely, to stir the air a little. Now open the door. There comes a southerly breeze. Better than ten thousand fans. Fans are your human religious systems. The wind is like the Gospel of our

[1] *St. Paul the Traveller*, p. 229.

Lord Jesus Christ, brought home to the soul by the power of the Holy Spirit."

4. In the native State we shall expect to find religious ideas rather narrow and rigid. It certainly was so in the old Greek cities. It is emphatically so in some of the Indian States to-day. In Travancore, for instance, in a population half that of Lancashire, there are four hundred and twenty separate castes. So rigid are the barriers between them that Miss Carmichael tells [1] of an old coolie who was starving to death because a bone had stuck in his throat. His master's daughter said, "My father never thought of it as his affair. Only our own caste people are our affair."

We can well imagine what an effect a gospel of true brotherhood has upon a community of this kind.

St. Paul gives some strong words upon the nature of Christian brotherliness (1 Thess. iv. 9, 10; 2 Thess. i. 3). On the other hand, the Epistle emphasises the fact that Christian affinity is seriously affected by wilful sin. His words, in 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14, prescribe isolation for the infected cases. It is instructive also to note that those who were

[1] *Overweights of Joy*, p. 150.

tempted to be narrow in their sympathy, are reminded that the crowning sin which caused the rejection of the Jewish nation by God was the fact of their non-missionary spirit (ii. 16).

5. Persecution would be likely to be specially acute, and we find it accordingly dealt with in 1, i. 6, ii. 14, 15, iii. 3, 4; 2 Thess. i. 4–6, and he bids them not to be "unnerved by their present trials" (1, iii. 3, Weymouth). Even where persecution is absent, certain disabilities often attach to the position of an alien resident in a non-Christian State. For instance, in one native State at least, no property is acquirable by the European. A feature of this kind gives great opportunity for the training of the native Christian who has to undertake responsibilities which would otherwise be borne by Europeans. We find an appreciation in *The Hindu Patriot* of the fact that "the native chiefs are becoming associated in the Councils of the Government." And if in the State much more in the Church. The Rev. Norman Tubbs, writing of a Swami who has become a Christian, but who still retains his fakir's dress, says: "From the way the men in our hostel treated the Swami I could see that once we have Christianity really

racy of the soil, and no longer a European product, the day of India's conversion will not be long delayed."

6. We shall expect to find in many cases an independence of spirit which may be turned to good effect, but may also make real difficulties for the organisers of a native Church. "The old Macedonian spirit of independence," says Lightfoot, "showed itself in the self-assertion and contempt for authority which St. Paul rebukes in 1 Thess. v. 12."

7. We shall not be surprised to find false ideas on the indignity of labour. The Greeks never felt that manual labour was honourable, and St. Paul's words (in 1 Thess. ii. 9, iv. 11; 2 Thess. iii. 8–12) are intended to repress the false notion, and cultivate the truer ideal. So Mr. Tyndale Biscoe has had considerable difficulty in this same matter in training his Cashmiri students. See a most interesting article on the building of a dispensary at Srinagar, in *Awake* (May 1910).

8. We shall find a striking difference in the way in which death is regarded. An old inscription in Thessalonica speaks about "no reviving after death and no meeting again after the grave." St. Paul, on the contrary, emphasises the joy of reunion, and a certainty of the hope

beyond the grave (1 Thess. iv. 13), and in both these letters turns the attention of his converts with special directness to that which is far more important than death, the possibility of the advent of our Lord. It is found everywhere throughout both letters. It is in this that he finds his own incentive to work. It is this which he urges upon them as the motive which should make them use their opportunities to the full, and answer the call of to-day (see 1 Thess. ii. 19, iii. 13, v. 23, etc.).

"Rise! for the day is passing,
And you lie dreaming on;
The others have buckled their armour,
And forth to the fight have gone:

Your future has deeds of glory,
Of honour (God grant it may),
But your arm will never be stronger,
Or the need so great as to-day.

Stay not to sharpen your weapons,
Or the hour will strike at last
When, from dreams of a coming battle,
You may wake to find it past!"

A. A. PROCTER.

Questions for Discussion

*1. "The divine origin of the Emperor is one of the bases of Japanese patriotism." "If officials who profess Christianity made a habit of standing aloof from services in honour of the spirits of the Imperial ancestors, there cannot be any doubt as to the unfavourable impression produced upon the mind of the nation" (Captain Brinkley). Compare the patriotic position of a Christian Japanese with that of the Christians in Thessalonica, and discuss the true attitude to be adopted.

2. "A Brahman and an ox are nearer akin than a Brahman and a leather-worker." How would these Epistles meet such a condition of affairs?

3. "Your visits," said a Hindu woman to a Christian lady, "are a comfort to me. I do not believe any more in idols. They do not help." Compare this with the statement made about the Thessalonians.

4. "They accept our teaching as the truth indeed," says Mr. Whitaker of the Eskimo. What text in the Epistles is illustrated by this?

5. Compare the statements about death in the Epistles with these two extracts :—

(*a*) A dying Gond refused to have a sorcerer

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saying, "Jesus Christ is coming, and is taking me up."

(*b*) A party of Arrians in Travancore asked for teachers, saying, "We die like beasts and are buried like dogs; ought you to neglect us?"

6. During a Boxer outbreak a Chinese catechist said, "I am not afraid. I have God." What was the support of the Thessalonians in their affliction?

7. Mr. Abel of Kwato, New Guinea, in speaking of his industrial mission work says: "We were experimenting, and as they chafed under restriction which was so new to them we watched with painful anxiety." "We cannot overestimate what it did in making the children of lethargic and naturally indolent savages, keen workmen. Our young people grew to have quite a mean opinion of a lazy life." Discuss St. Paul's example and advice to the Thessalonians illustrated by the above.

*8. A missionary reports that the native State of Mysore has abolished "the dancing-girl curse" from all the Hindu temples in its territory, and contrasts this with the far less aggressive action in territories under British control. If one is possible, ought not the other to be attempted? Discuss the difficulties and duties involved.

ST. PAUL AND THE THESSALONIANS

Programme

Aim: To discover how these Epistles illustrate the life of a native Christian in a non-Christian State.

1. Hymn No. 126.
2. Let one of the members read Acts xvii. 1–9.
3. Prayer by the leader.
4. A short paper on No. 1.
5. Prayer for guidance for all in difficult surroundings.
6. Short answers to Nos. 2, 3, and 4.
7. Short prayer.
8. Answer 5 and 6, or discuss 7.
9. Take the opinion of the Circle on No. 8.
10. Hymn No. 1.
11. Benediction.

(Further help in Ramsay's *St. Paul the Traveller*, ch. x.; *Pauline Studies*, chs. iii., viii.; *Cities of St. Paul*, chs. i., vii.; Lightfoot's *Biblical Essays*, ch. vi.; and also arts. "Thessalonians" and "Thessalonica," in Hastings' *Dict. of Bible*, by Drs. Lock and Dickson.)

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